

Drawings

Applicants acknowledge the requirement for formal drawings and will submit same upon allowance.

35 USC 102 rejection

Claims 1-5, 9, and 15-17 stand newly rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 5,918,431 to Schiedegger ('431).

Applicants claim, in part:

said body including an integral fastener for engaging the first receiver in the siding strip and an opening having a predetermined shape and size for receiving the first portion of the utility-related structure.

Applicants respectfully submit that this reference fails to anticipate the claims for reasons noted in the prior response. For the sake of clarity, Applicants will expand on the prior remarks.

The Examiner points to integral fasteners 17a and 17b. Applicant respectfully submits these are not fasteners, but are mounting flanges, as described in the '431 patent at col. 4, lines 30-31. These mounting flanges 17a and 17b are used to hold the base assembly 16 to the wall, and are not integral fasteners which engage any receiver in the siding strip as highlighted in the claim language above.

As argued previously, the '431 patent teaches mounting the base 16 to the wall, installing the siding, then covering the hole in the siding with the cover 18. Conversely, the present invention claims the integral fasteners engaging the siding strip. This eliminates the unsightly gaps encountered as in the '431 patent, as would occur when the planar undersurface of the cover engages the nonparallel surface of the siding, e.g. as illustrated in Fig. 8 of the '431 patent (see the gap between 12b and the cover, both at the top and bottom of fig. 8)

For further clarification, as previously mentioned, the '431 reference shows a 3-piece cover which attaches to a wall, and a cutout is made in the siding. The 3-piece cover merely picture-frames the cutout in the siding (as best shown in Fig 17) and does not attach to the siding as claimed by Applicants. As noted with respect to Chubb, the '431 reference provides

for unsightly gaps to the siding, which is addressed by Applicants invention. Accordingly, the Office Action fails to make a prima facie case and the 35 USC 102 rejection should be withdrawn.

35 USC 103 rejection

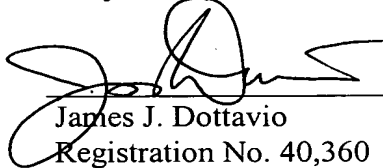
Claims 6-8, 10-14, 18 and 19-23 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Sschiedegger (US 5,918,431 in view of Cornelius (5,878,543) and Jurvis (6,408,580). For the reasons noted above, Applicants respectfully submit that the limitations of the independent claims are not shown or suggested in the cited references (alone or in combination), and therefore the 103 rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested. Allowance of claims 1-23 at an early date is solicited. If any questions should arise with respect to the above Remarks, or if the Examiner has any comments or suggestions to place the claims in better condition for allowance, it is requested that the Examiner contact Applicant's attorney at the number listed below.

Applicant authorizes any fees required pertaining to this response be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0568.

Respectfully submitted,



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